

Aida

2000-2001

Thursday, June 7, 2001 7:30 PM

Saturday, June 9, 2001 8:00 PM

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Friday, June 15, 2001 8:00 PM

Sunday, June 17, 2001 1:00 PM

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AIDA



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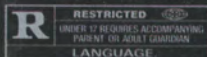
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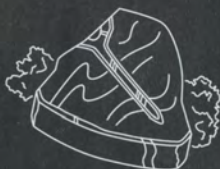
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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

Aida

2001 Verdi Celebration

Vol. 78, No. 10

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After David Roberts (Scottish, 1796–1864)
The Island of Philae by Sunset – Egypt
Lithograph
59.7 x 42.3 cm (23.5 x 16.6 in.)

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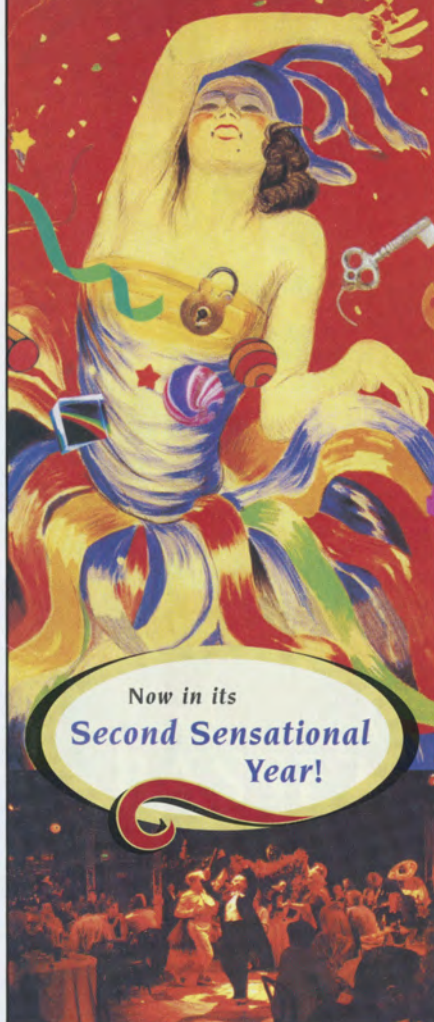
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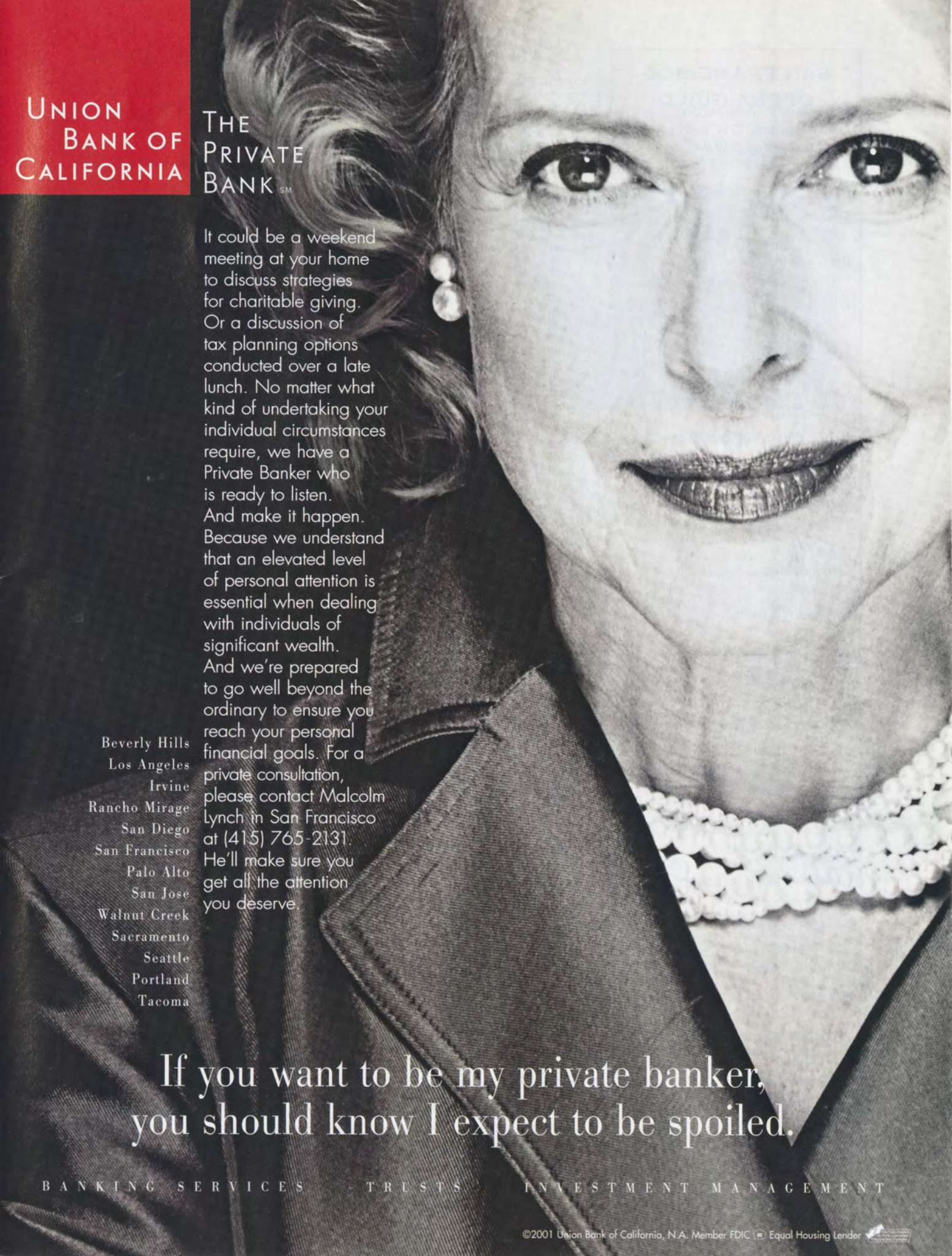
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A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR



SOHL

I am delighted to welcome you to San Francisco Opera's 2000/2001 Season, which runs from September 8, 2000 to July 1, 2001 in the War Memorial Opera House. We've planned a stunning array of masterworks ranging from baroque classics to contemporary works, including a world premiere of a new American opera, three Company premieres and the return of several beloved gems.

The Company's commitment to fostering the growth of the operatic repertoire continues with the world premiere of *Dead Man Walking* – a San Francisco commission from Chase Composer-in-Residence Jake Heggie, with renowned playwright Terrence McNally. First an award-winning book by Sister Helen Prejean then an Academy Award-winning motion picture, this eagerly anticipated production brings together an incomparable creative team and an impressive cast.

The year 2001 also marks the centenary of the passing of one of the greatest of all musical geniuses – Giuseppe Verdi. To commemorate his life and work, San Francisco Opera will offer a sampling of his finest masterpieces with a new production of *Luisa Miller*, as well as exciting stagings of *La Traviata*, *Aida* and *Simon Boccanegra*. Our 78th Season is also highlighted by the Company premieres of Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride*, Moore's poignant tale from the Old West, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, which is presented in an all new production, and Handel's *Semele*, as well as revivals of our celebrated productions of Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*, Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore*.

A host of international conductors, including our own Music Director Donald Runnicles, will lead an illustrious roster of artists, who are joined by eminent directors and designers to create this yearlong celebration of opera. Enjoy!

Lotfi Mansouri
General Director

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AND FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ASSOCIATION



MCCARTHY

On behalf of San Francisco Opera Association, we heartily congratulate Lotfi Mansouri in his final year as General Director. Our 2000/2001 Season marks 12 years under his inspired leadership, and it is because of his vision that we are celebrating yet another milestone with the world premiere of *Dead Man Walking*. This commission would not have been possible without the extraordinary and deeply appreciated leadership of Mrs. Paul L. Wattis, as well as funding for the Composer-in-Residence and additional production support provided by The Chase Global Private Bank, The Carlyle Fund, Susan and Dennis Carlyle, co-founders, The Howard Gilman Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Throughout Lotfi's tenure, it has been his mission to ensure that the vital art of opera is accessible to everyone in our community. Nowhere is this more evident than in his efforts to develop future audiences with massive outreach and to present productions of innovative works. We achieve this through significant support from our year-round sponsors: Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, the California Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts as well as our season sponsors: Bank of America, American Airlines and Kawai Pianos, provided by San Francisco Pianoworks, Inc.

Additionally, we wish to thank this year's production sponsors The Edgar Foster Daniels Foundation (*Luisa Miller*), Fred and Peggy Furth (*The Tsar's Bride*), Jane Bernstein and Bob Ellis (*The Ballad of Baby Doe*), Koret Foundation (for educational activities related to *L'Elisir d'Amore*) and The Bernard Osher Endowment Fund (*Semele* and *Der Rosenkavalier*).

Our thanks also go to San Francisco Opera Guild for partnering with the Opera Center each year to bring opera into 160 schools in Northern California, reaching approximately 30,000 students, and to BRAVO! Club for continuing to cultivate future opera audiences. Indeed, our 78th Season is an exciting time in the Company's history and it is our sincere pleasure to welcome you to San Francisco Opera.

Franklin P. Johnson, Jr.
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LISTENING TO AIDA

BY MICHAEL STEINBERG



LACKENBACH

that, when a seventeen-year-old boy saw *Aida* in Pisa and realized that evening that his future was in opera, not as a church musician like the rest of the Puccini clan. How clearly could one even hear those ethereal measures?

Today, when the opera is about to begin, the theater is dark and the curtain



SCHERL

(Above) Renata Tebaldi made her U.S. debut here during the 1950 season in the title role of the opening night *Aida*. She returned to the role for another opening night in 1955, at which time she was joined by the Amonasro of Leonard Warren. (Right) Leontyne Price, whose first ever *Aida* occurred on this stage in 1957, returned to the role in 1959 and for the opening night of 1963. In 1981, in town while preparing *Il Trovatore*, she agreed to go on for an indisposed colleague in one performance, at which time she was captured from the wings. Following that, she returned to the role in the summer of 1984, then made *Aida* her farewell performance to the operatic stage at the Met in 1985.

What a magical beginning it is, with muted violins alone, *pianissimo*, playing music moving in smallest steps. It suggests tenderness, shyness, vulnerability. Beneath this surface, though, we sense the possibility of passion: that octave leap in the fourth measure. Just half of the first violins are playing, but

soon the rest of the section joins in, followed by the seconds, also divided in two, and finally by the violas. For just six notes, a single flute and a single clarinet support the violas, but as more instruments enter, Verdi compensates by pushing the dynamic level down to *pianississimo*. As the paragraph moves toward its close, he writes *morendo*, dying away.

I have sometimes wondered what effect this one minute of music made at the first performance in Cairo, or six weeks later in Milan, or a few years after

illuminated. The orchestra tunes, the conductor enters to applause. All that adds up to a clear set of signals to the audience, a courteous command for silence. When that silence has possessed the house, we can hear the most hushed prelude, from *Figaro* to *Rheingold*, from *Aida* to *Capriccio*.

In Verdi's day, before modern flexible electric lighting technology — that became available only very late in the nineteenth century — a *pianissimo* beginning must have been risky in Italian opera houses (and probably no less so in Cairo). Besides, opera audiences were only just beginning to pay any attention to conductors at all, and the maestro's appearance in the pit was not yet an effective summons to attention. (Verdi felt strongly about the necessity of authoritative musical leadership, but around the time of the first performances of *Aida*, he vented with scorn on the subject of the emerging and silly fashion of actually applauding the conductor.)

Michael Steinberg is a writer and lecturer who served for twenty years as San Francisco Symphony's program annotator.

I don't know how often in Verdi's lifetime the first notes of *Macbeth*, *Luisa Miller*, *La Traviata*, *Les Vêpres Siciliennes*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Don Carlos*, and *Aida* itself went unheard in audience hubbub — one fears especially for those virtually incorporeal beginnings of *La Traviata* and *Aida* — but the risk of a *piano* or *pianissimo* start is one he was willing to take again and again. No one would want to miss those exuberant explosions of energy we experience when the curtain goes up on *Die Meistersinger* or *Falstaff*, but theater magic is at its most potent when, beginning with the first note of music, we are transported in utmost quiet into that world of mysteries and promise set before us when the curtain rises and we see two women listening to the voice of a man we cannot see, or an old man of military bearing deep in remembrance and thought, and here, two men, an older and a younger, priest and soldier, in solemn conversation.

But let us go back to the *Aida* Prelude. The paragraph for high strings has arrived at its close. Now the cellos come in. They, too, are muted and *pianissimo*, but their gait is firmer, and their march-like tread is soon seconded by the other strings, entering one section at a time. I hear something menacing in this muffled march, although I cannot swear I would feel that if I had never seen or heard *Aida* and these measures were not laden with associations. An opera — and the same *mutatis mutandis* goes for a symphony, play, novel, movie, etcetera — is invented not only for the innocent person who is experiencing it for the first time and whose memory is newly at work sensing and assembling associations, but also for old friends who know, more or less, what is coming. Each is potentially the ideal listener, though in quite different ways. (Speaking to students at Princeton about *The Magic Mountain*, Thomas Mann advised that they read it twice — provided, of course, that they liked it the first time — since all its symbols and *leitmotifs* are designed to work forwards as well as backwards.)

For a moment more, though, let us assume the posture of innocence. What we will not fail to notice about the new paragraph begun by the cellos, aside from that most obvious difference between high and low, is that the successive instrumental entrances are more closely spaced, and — even more striking — the way this time the entry of more instruments leads to its natural consequence, a crescendo. Very swiftly, the music builds to a *fortissimo* crest, and there we actually hear both themes simultaneously, the yielding one and the march. Abruptly, though, Verdi reverts to *pianissimo* and a new version of the opening music, after which the Prelude moves toward a quiet close. That close — undisturbed, one hopes, by applause for the

scenery or the sight of a famous tenor — is remarkable for a curious musical detail, namely the way, when the final cadence has been reached the violins, *pianissimo* and *morendo*, ascend through two more octaves up to a high, high D. These rising closes — I never feel quite right calling them cadences inasmuch as that word comes from *cadere*, to fall — are an *Aida* signature, and we hear many of them during the course of the evening.

Expressively — psychologically, if you like — the *Aida* Prelude is very simple: There is a sweet theme and a sinister one. Soon we will learn that the sweet, yielding theme belongs to *Aida* herself, something that Verdi makes as clear as possible. The proud Princess Amneris, who is jealous and suspicious as well as proud, is trying to lead Radames into giving away that his passion is directed at her slave rather than herself. *Aida* enters during their increasingly tense conversation, and as she comes in, a clarinet, *dolce* and *espressivo*, plays the violin theme from the Prelude. It is quite a while before *Aida* actually says anything, but this combination of an already familiar, poignant instrumental phrase and the presence of a silent singer — a star soprano at that — makes an indelible connection in our minds. We have to wait a little longer for the Prelude's darker theme to reappear. That happens in Act II, in the scene when the Egyptians celebrate their military victory over *Aida's* kinsmen, the Ethiopians, and the Priests command all to give thanks to the gods.

Something else the *Aida* Prelude can alert us to is that the drama it introduces is essentially an intimate work. A particular curse of this opera is that so many people think of it as a work about elephants. Yes, there is the Triumphal Scene — I'm not even sure they manage ele-

Why Verdi?

The classic statement on the subject is Mozart's, when he writes to his father that his most recent piano concertos are "a happy medium between too hard and too easy...[with] passages from which connoisseurs alone can derive satisfaction, but written so that non-connoisseurs will be pleased even if they don't know why." With Verdi it took the connoisseurs a while to catch on: Only in the last forty years or so have there been serious analytic studies of his music. But the public has always understood, though of course embracing some of the operas more readily or quickly than others. The march from *Aida* was one of the first pieces of classical music I knew by name, followed by *La donna è mobile* (sung by my Uncle Max in German as *Ob, wie so trügerisch sind Frauenherzen*), and I thrill to those pieces and to the Anvil Chorus and the *Rigoletto* Quartet (played as a piano duet with my mother) as much as I did as a boy in single digits. The connoisseur in me loves the never ending array of subtleties that continues to reveal itself, and at the same time I am awed by Verdi's gift of simplicity, of directness. And I am drawn, over and again, to the operas because of the clear-sightedness with which he understands — and shows to us — human relationships in those confrontations, mostly confrontations of troubled souls, that he demanded from his long-suffering librettists in his unending quest "to invent truth" on the stage.

— M.S.

phants at the Verona Arena or the Baths of Caracalla, the most likely venues for zoologic extravagance — but *Aida* really hinges most crucially on a series of confrontations, mostly a *duet*: Amneris and Radames; Amneris and *Aida*; *Aida* and Amonasro; *Aida* and Radames; these last two scenes then, for the climax of Act III, coalescing into a trio for *Aida*, Radames, and Amonasro; Amneris and Radames; the extraordinary Trial Scene, with the priests and a silent Radames, but with Amneris, supposedly on the sidelines, as the most potent presence on the stage; and finally *Aida* and Radames, who are at last allowed a love duet.

Verdi, by the way, felt some uncertainty about what seems to us his miraculous and perfect Prelude. Or perhaps it was his publisher, Ricordi, who urged him to compose a full-length Overture for the *prima* in Milan, even arranging to have it sent to Cairo, where *Aida* remained in the repertory, in case it worked well. At the Overture's climax, he combines the two themes of the Prelude and adds a third, associated with Amneris. "Either this will have a strong effect or it will just be a mess," he said. He decided it was a mess and withdrew the Overture, though he did not destroy it. I have heard it just once, on a Toscanini/NBC Symphony air check from 1940. The thought of it opening a performance of *Aida* is jarring, but it would be an effective concert piece, not as fine as the *Forza del Destino* Overture, but I should think not inferior to the *Nabucco* and *Luisa Miller* overtures.

Just as the Prelude presents the extremely simple differences between high and low, sweet and sinister, so does the whole opera seem to rest on very basic contrasts, perhaps not so much of good and bad as of *simpatico* (*Aida* and

Radames, the lovers, and perhaps also Amonasro, Aida's father) and *antipatico* (Amneris and the priests, the people who get in the lovers' way). I wrote "seem" because this is not all quite as unambiguous as it might at first appear to be, but more of that in a moment.

Aida is one of the most loved of operas, and the ABC triad of *Aida*, *La Bohème*, and *Carmen* is still fundamental to the box-office health of houses everywhere. Still, *Aida* has had its detractors, right from the beginning. The public loved it, in Cairo, in Milan, in New York (which it reached before it went to any other European cities), in London, and everywhere else. But some connoisseurs and professionals had their doubts. Some still do. Only a few days ago, a friend and colleague told me of a recent conversation



Two views of San Francisco Opera's *Aida* Triumphal Scene, seen across a 50-year span: (above) Giovanni Martinelli's Radames is borne in 1935 (Aida was Elisabeth Rethberg, whose father Amonasro was portrayed by Nelson Eddy); (left) The same scene in 1984.

with a Renowned Verdi Scholar. The question arose of which Verdi operas one had reservations or out-and-out disliked. Tentatively, my friend ventured to mention *Aida*, whereupon the RVS replied, "Well, of course, no one likes *Aida*."

I have to say I was astonished by that story. I also have to admit that if I could take just one Verdi opera to a desert island, I would not choose *Aida*. But what might bring about the sentiment so vigorously voiced by the RVS? I believe it comes down to two things. The secondary one is the difficulty of making the dance interludes — one for the priestesses in Act I and another for the Moorish slave children in the triumphal scene — convincing in performance. In 1963, the Metropolitan Opera engaged Katherine Dunham to stage these scenes, and her unmistakably African, erotically charged dances thrilled some viewers even while alienating and upsetting others. I remember it gratefully as the only *Aida* I ever saw where what one saw in the dances was not on a drastically different level from Verdi's music and the singing of it. At best, it is rare to have these moments come across as part of the work rather than as emoliments interrupting its flow.

The more central issue is the one of

Aida's essential simplicity. Even some of the earliest Italian critics who wrote about *Aida* complained that the work's dramaturgy was old-fashioned and conventional. I am reminded of this a lot just now because *Aida* — the other *Aida*, Sir Elton John's — has just appeared with much hoopla in the city where I live: indeed, the Mayor even declared the opening date an official *Aida* Day. The new *Aida* book, fashioned by David Henry Hwang and Sir Tim Rice (the latter officially credited as librettist) is interesting and in its own way at least as good as what Antonio Ghislanzoni created for Verdi. That, for example, Radames was head of the army that captured Aida and that he himself assigned her to Amneris's household adds texture to the tale, as does the way that at the beginning Aida and Amneris seem genuinely to be friends. On the other hand, political and religious issues have been pretty much leached out of the story, and what remains is a simple love triangle. And no question, the Mariette-Ghislanzoni-Verdi *Aida* lends itself to that sort of reductionism: We can be sure we are not likely to see an Elton John/Tim Rice *Don Carlos* or *Simon Boccanegra* soon.

Still, even if Verdi had, for the

moment, withdrawn from the dramatic complexities of such works as *La Forza del Destino*, *Don Carlos*, and *Boccanegra*, the composer who defined his job of musical dramatist as "inventing the truth" — *inventare il vero* — was not, in his twenty-sixth opera, likely to be satisfied by placing a quartet of cardboard figures on the stage. At each encounter with *Aida*, I become more aware of shadows and complexities that enable us to see these personages as three-dimensional.

We first see and hear Radames in conversation with the High Priest, Ramfis. He is eager to know whether he is the man chosen to command the Egyptian armies in a new war against Ethiopia, though his sense of decorum keeps his excitement contained until he is alone. The moment Ramfis leaves the stage, trumpets sound, and Radames revels in his fantasy of glory. At once he betrays himself as a *macho* muddle-head, fancying himself saying to Aida that it was for her that he fought and conquered, forgetting that it is her people he cannot wait to clobber. But quickly he loses himself in dreams of his "heavenly Aida," and the music imbues his words with a delicacy of feeling that none other of Verdi's romantic tenors commands. That comes less from the tune — actually awkward, with its insistence on rising on weak syllables (*AiDA, diviNA, serTO*) — than from the miraculous, fluttering orchestra with its measured trills and quasi-trills for the flute, its empathetic oboe and bassoon, and its palpitating muted strings. One would of course like it to come from the tenor as well, but the Pertiles and Bergonzis of this world are rare.

Verdi's desire to show us that Radames has a tender side leads to one of the most

Continued on page 28



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AIDA'S EGYPT

BY JOHN SCHAUER

Visitors to modern-day Cairo inevitably are flabbergasted by the overwhelming profusion of items on display in the Egyptian Museum. That the world's greatest collection of ancient Egyptian artifacts should be there may seem laughably obvious, but oddly enough Egypt was relatively late in acquiring its own collection. Early "archeologists" were often no better than thieves and plunderers, and enormous numbers of treasures ended up in the museums of Leyden, London, Paris, Berlin and Turin.

As late as 1855, the modest collection that had been accumulated in Cairo was given away by Pasha Abbas as a gesture of hospitality to the visiting Archduke Maximilian of Austria (today it can be seen in Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum). Three years later, a young Frenchman named Auguste Mariette was appointed director of antiquities in Egypt, a man who just said "no" when France's Empress Eugenie asked the pasha to give her a collection of antiquities that had traveled to Paris in 1867.

The collection that Mariette curated, added to and protected eventually grew into the phenomenal holdings of today's Egyptian Museum in Cairo. To opera-goers, however, Mariette is best known as the man who proposed the subject, sketched the plot and oversaw the design of one of the most popular operas of all time, Verdi's *Aida*. Yet, while he was consulted on matters of historicism and authenticity, the settings that he devised have sometimes seemed like a strange mish-mash of Egyptian history.

In approaching Egyptian history, it helps to keep in mind the nearly incomprehensible length of time that the civilization we label "ancient Egyptian" existed — more than 3,000 years. The country lasted so long that eventually the origins of Egypt were ancient even to the ancient Egyptians themselves. Consider the fact that Cleopatra, the last ruler to preside over an independent Egypt, is closer in time to us than she is to the builders of the Great Pyramid.

The official start of Egypt as a state is reckoned at approximately 3100 B.C.E., when a king named Narmer united the two kingdoms of Upper (southern) and Lower (northern) Egypt. It was his successor (and mostly likely son) who founded the city of Memphis, which



The pyramids of Giza, which appeared in the first-act set design for the world premiere of *Aida*, today form the backdrop for Cairo Opera's presentation of the same opera. Visible near their base are the towers constructed for the production's lighting equipment.

flourished throughout Egypt's history and is the setting of the first act of *Aida*.

Today we have only educated guesses as to what ancient Memphis looked like. Most of the area became buried, built over and inhabited, making modern excavation nearly impossible, and the earliest city was built primarily of wood and mud brick, materials that don't last. Mariette's stage description specifies "a great door beyond which can be seen the temples and palaces of Memphis and the Pyramids," which the archeologist must have known from personal experience are not visible from Memphis. The nearest pyramid, at Saqqara, is the so-called Step Pyramid of Djoser (2668-2649), the first large-scale building on earth to be built entirely of stone.

In later years the Egyptians would routinely build their temples and tombs of stone, since these buildings were meant to last for all time. Temporal buildings for everyday life, even the palaces of the Pharaohs, were made of far more impermanent materials. The result is that most of the artifacts we have of ancient Egypt are religious or funerary, giving some people the false impression that the Egyptians were excessively religious and preoccupied with death.

The fact is that the ancient Egyptians' so-called preoccupation with death was not based upon any desire to escape the trials of a cruel physical existence nor to

abnegate, like the early Christians, a corporeal existence that was deemed sinful; rather, they wanted more than anything to continue a life that they found very pleasing, indeed. The regularity with which the Nile River flooded its banks every year, conferring a natural wealth of fertile silt upon the growing fields, led the predominantly agricultural population to view the world with a cheerful confidence unique among ancient civilizations.

Portrayed in the past as a cruel military nation that preyed upon neighboring civilizations so as to enslave them to build their massive monuments, ancient Egypt is believed by most of today's scholars to have been far more benign. The huge work force necessary to build the pyramids and temples and tombs was easily raised from among the bulk of the population that was idle for much of the year during the inundation season. The allure of dedicating oneself to the work of a living god on earth, as Pharaoh was regarded during various phases of Egyptian history, also explains why forced conscription was not necessary.

One may wonder what it was that prompted the primordial political shift during the Bronze Age in Egypt during which, in the words of historian Michael Wood, "the many surrendered power to the few, to live in the condition in which most of the people of the planet still live

A former staff writer for San Francisco Opera, John Schauer is currently Publications Editor for the Ravinia Festival in Chicago.

today." Part of the answer may be found in an underlying paranoia that is the price paid for a relatively secure and constant environment. Yes, the sun might rise every day, and the Nile might flood every year — but what if they didn't? What if the great order of the universe that had come into existence at the creation were to erode, making possible the return of the dreaded chaos from which all life, even the gods themselves, had emerged?

The people needed an intermediary with the great cosmic forces, and that intermediary was the pharaoh. (Mariette was not specific as to which "King of Egypt" is indicated in the opera's libretto. The first Pharaoh to penetrate into the Nubian territory Mariette refers to as "Ethiopia" was Thutmosis I, 1524–1518, and the most famous Pharaoh of them all, Rameses II, had put down a revolt in Nubia in 1276 B.C.E., three years before he became Pharaoh.) It has been said that the primary element of the pharaoh's job description was the maintaining of ma'at, or the world order. A substantial means of doing so was the perpetuation of rituals at the various temples.

Three different temples are mentioned in Mariette's scene descriptions: the Memphis temple of "Vulcan," the Greek name for the Egyptian god Ptah (Act I, Scene 2 and Act IV, Scene 2); the temple of Amun-Ra at Karnak (Act II, Scene 2); and the temple of Isis (Act III). Although the temple of Ptah no longer exists, enough of the temple of Amun-Ra at Karnak remains to suggest the mind-boggling impression it must have made while it flourished. Built on the site of an older cult center, what remains today dates mostly from the start of the New Kingdom (1570 B.C.E.) onward, when a prominent Theban family established the 18th Dynasty and elevated their local



Perhaps the most recognizable structure at Philae, the Kiosk of Trajan (also known as Pharaoh's Bed), appeared in the Act III set design for the world premiere of *Aida*. Begun by the Roman emperor Trajan (98–117 C.E.), the structure was never finished. An earlier image of the same site is featured on this magazine's cover.

god, Amun, to the preeminent position in the national pantheon. Henceforth Pharaohs would try to outdo themselves in adding to the temple complex at Karnak. Named Ipet-Isut, or "the Most Select of Places," Karnak is the largest religious complex ever built. During the reign of Rameses III (1182–1151), the priesthood of Amun presided over a workforce of over 81,000 male personnel, 924 square miles of fields and a fleet of 83 ships. Within 70 years the power of the priesthood of Amun rivaled that of the Pharaoh himself, leaving the door open to invasion and conquest by the Nubians, who ruled Egypt for the next 90 years as the 25th Dynasty.

Karnak, at the time of Mariette, was, like many of Egypt's great monuments, mostly covered with sand or debris. So submerged were some of them that local people built their homes on the temple roofs. But this was not the case with the temple of Isis on the island of Philae, which seems to have been the inspiration

for the temple specified for Act III. Not yet subjected to the ravages of the rising Nile from the first Aswan Dam (begun in 1899 C.E.), it reportedly retained at Mariette's time the original brilliant colors with which the Egyptians painted most of their temples' surfaces. It is also by far the youngest of the three temples Mariette cites, its construction having been begun at the start of the 26th Dynasty (664 B.C.E.), and it was still used as a center of worship as late as 453 C.E., well after Emperor Theodosius banned pagan temples, making it the last holdout of Egyptian tradition on Egyptian soil.

Despite the well-preserved evidence of Philae and other late-period temples, set designers for theaters and movies usually opt for fantasy, showing huge, cavernous sanctuaries dominated by an enormous statue of a deity before which masses of dancers and supernumeraries cavort. The reality was exactly the opposite.

Egyptian temples, unlike Christian churches, were not meant as places of public worship. Common folk had their own idols and protective spirits, but worship of the great state gods was left to professionals. The archetypal design of an Egyptian temple usually incorporated a massive front entrance flanked by huge oblique towers called pylons. Passing through this gate (or gates; some temples had multiple pylons), one enters an open-air courtyard surrounded by a portico of towering columns; this was as far as anyone outside the priesthood was permitted to proceed. Next came a shadowy hypostyle (i.e., column-supported) hall, its lofty roof held up by towering stone representations of papyrus stalks and lotus stems, the only light filtering in from stone latticework near the ceiling. Eventually one — and only one — reached the inner sanctuary, where the statue of the god, perhaps no more than one or two feet tall, was kept enshrined. Only the Pharaoh or a high priest acting on his behalf was allowed to approach the god to administer the daily ablutions and make the requisite

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Tourists pass through the pylons of the Temple of Isis at Philae, one of the better-preserved monuments in Egypt today. Though still identified as Philae, the temple today stands on the nearby island of Agilkai, where it was moved stone by stone during the late 1970s after the High Aswan Dam submerged the original location.

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Libretto by ANTONIO GHISLANZONI

Aida

(in Italian)

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William Lacey (6/21)

Stage Director

Paula Williams

Set Designer

Douglas W. Schmidt

Costume Designer

Lawrence Casey

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

Choreographer

Christian Holder

Musical Preparation

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William Hobbs
Carol Isaac
Ernest Fredric Knell
Sara Jobin
William Lacey
Svetlana Gorzhevskaya

Supertitles

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Assistant Stage Directors

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THURSDAY, JUNE 21 AT 7:30
TUESDAY, JUNE 26 AT 7:30
FRIDAY, JUNE 29 AT 8:00
SUNDAY, JULY 1 AT 7:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>Ramfis</i>	Paata Burchuladze
<i>Radames</i>	Richard Margison
<i>Amneris</i>	Larissa Diadkova
<i>Aida</i>	Michèle Crider Norma Fantini* (6/9, 15, 21, 29)
<i>The King of Egypt</i>	Raymond Aceto
<i>A messenger</i>	Todd Geer
<i>A priestess</i>	Tammy Jenkins
<i>Amonasro</i>	Stephan Pyatnychko*
<i>Solo Dancer</i>	Eric Hoisington*

*Priests, priestesses, soldiers, ministers, officials,
Ethiopian prisoners, Egyptian populace*

Corps de ballet

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Epoch of the Pharaohs; Memphis and Thebes

ACT I	Scene 1	The King's palace at Memphis
	Scene 2	The Temple of Fthà
INTERMISSION		
ACT II	Scene 1	Amneris's apartment in the palace, Thebes
	Scene 2	A public square in Thebes
INTERMISSION		
ACT III	Scene 1	The banks of the Nile, outside the Temple of Isis
	Scene 2	The judgment hall
	Scene 3	A tomb below the Temple

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AIDA SYNOPSIS

Radames, a captain of the guard, is in love with Aida, a slave girl. Aida's mistress, the King of Egypt's daughter Amneris, is also in love with the captain. Not known by anyone in Egypt, Aida is a princess of Ethiopia and the daughter of Egypt's worst enemy, King Amonasro.

ACT I

SCENE 1 — Ramfis, the High Priest, is on his way to inform the Egyptian King of the name of the general whom the goddess Isis has chosen to lead the Egyptians against the Ethiopians. Radames hopes to be chosen and, envisioning a glorious victory, expresses his affection for Aida. Amneris joins him. As she is questioning him, Aida enters. Noting that Radames is strongly affected by the appearance of Aida, Amneris suspects the reason for his embarrassment and is overcome with jealousy. Accompanied by his ministers, the King enters. A messenger is brought forward and reports confirmation of the Ethiopian invasion. Radames is announced as the chosen commander to lead the Egyptians against the enemy. Everyone pays homage to the young warrior and wishes for his victorious return. Aida, too, is caught up in the battle cry, and after the court leaves, berates herself for having betrayed her own people. Divided between loyalty to her father and country and her love for Radames, she asks the gods for strength.

SCENE 2 — In the Temple a solemn ceremony is held to prepare Radames for battle. He is presented with the sacred sword of Egypt.

ACT II

SCENE 1 — The Egyptian troops led by Radames have won the war. Amneris, still tormented by doubt and jealousy, resolves to question Aida and confirm her suspicions. Amneris manages to shake Aida's composure and forces her to reveal her love for Radames. Amneris is furious and shaken by the truth.

SCENE 2 — The people celebrate the return of the victorious troops and their leader Radames, who asks that the Ethiopian prisoners be brought forth. Among them, Aida recognizes her father. Hiding his true identity, Amonasro pleads for the lives of

his people. The Egyptian King accedes to Radames's wish that the prisoners be set free. Ramfis, warning of the consequences, succeeds in having Aida and her father retained as hostages. In token of Egypt's gratitude, the King awards Radames the hand of Amneris.

ACT III

SCENE 1 — To prepare for her wedding to Radames, Amneris retires to the Temple of Isis to worship with Ramfis. Outside the Temple, Aida waits for Radames. Having given up on her own happiness, she recalls her childhood in the valleys of Ethiopia. Amonasro joins her and raises her hopes for a happy life at the side of her beloved. The Ethiopian captives who were freed are banded together and once again ready themselves to attack Egypt. Hoping to exploit her love for Radames, Amonasro proposes that Aida ask Radames the route the Egyptian armies will take. At first Aida refuses, but he soon crushes her resistance. Amonasro hides as Radames appears, still affirming his love for Aida, hoping another victory will allow him to win her once and for all. Aida does not share his enthusiasm and instead persuades him to flee the country with her. As they start to leave, Aida asks which route the Egyptian troops will take. As he answers her, Amonasro reveals himself and Radames realizes he has been tricked into revealing an important military secret. As Amneris and Ramfis emerge from the Temple, Amonasro and Aida flee and Radames surrenders to the High Priest, ready to accept the consequences of his betrayal.

SCENE 2 — Amneris, torn between love and hatred for Radames, at last resolves to save him. She urges him to defend himself, but he refuses. The priests assemble and three times allow Radames a chance to present his defense. Three times he refuses. Consequently he is sentenced to die. Amneris pleads with the priests to revoke the sentence.

SCENE 3 — In the darkness of the tomb, Radames is joined by Aida who had hidden there earlier. While the priests chant their hymns, the two lovers, at last united, spend their final moments dreaming of a happier life. Above the tomb, Amneris asks forgiveness for her rancor and prays to Isis for redemption.

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Henryk De Rewenda
Robert Delany
Daniel Harper
Cameron Henley
Ken Johnson
David Kekuwa
Frederick Matthews*
Jim Meyer
William Pickersgill*
Daniel Pociernicki
Valery Portnov
Ken Rafanan
Tom Reed
Colby Roberts
Sigmund Seigel
Dan Stanley
Jere Torkelsen
Richard Walker*
Frederick Winthrop

EXTRA CHORUS

Terry Alvord
Jill Anderson
Deborah Benedict
Bonnie Brooks
Fran Burgess
Angela Cadelago-Zullinger
Melodi Dalton
Pat Graybill-Eckhoff
Anne Holmes
Alexandra Ivanoff
Sharon Kaye
Ann Magdalen
Nadja Matisoff
Katherine McKee
Eileen Meredith
Penelope Rains
Mimi Ruiz
Leslie Sandefur
Margaret Secour
Gina Silverman
Tanya Stum
Delia Voitoff-Bauman
Heidi L. Waterman

Darla Wigginton
Karen Winner-Huff
Susan Witt-Butler
Helene Zindarsian
Chris Corley
Dale Emde
Timothy Foster
Peter Girardot
George Hernandez
Dennis W. Jones
Gregory Kharik
Gregory Marks
Raymond Martinez
Tom McEachern
Michael P. Mendelsohn
James Monios
John Musselman
Bruce Nelson
John Owens
Scott C. Patton
Jess G. Perry
Robert V. Presley
Karl O. Saarni
Martyn Sharp

Peter Shypertt
Thomas Silveira
Kevin Simmons
Bradley Smith
Erich Straumann
Lee Strawn
Piet Van Allen
Richard Whitley

CORPS DE BALLET

Galina Alexandrova
Cynthia Drayer
Nora Heiber
Marina Hotchkiss
Laurie Miller
Chiharu Shibata
Ioannis Adoniou
David Bier
Gregory Dawson
Michael Kruzich
Carlo Sierras
James Strong

**also appearing in solo roles*

ARTIST PROFILES



Since 1991, American soprano **MICHÈLE CRIDER** has been singing to great acclaim at the major opera houses of the world. In Europe, they include Milan's La Scala, the Royal Opera at Covent Garden, Arena di Verona, the Deutsche and Staatsoper Berlin, as well as those in Paris, Vienna, Munich, Hamburg, Stuttgart, Wiesbaden, Florence, Zurich and Barcelona. Among the roles she has

performed are the title parts of *Aida*, *Luisa Miller* and *Madama Butterfly*, Leonora (*Il Trovatore*, *La Forza del Destino*), Amelia (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), Odabella (*Attila*), Lucrezia (*I Due Foscari*), and Giselda (*I Lombardi*). After her 1996 U.S. professional opera debut in San Diego as *Aida*, she made her 1997 San Francisco Opera bow in the same part and soon made her first Metropolitan Opera appearance in the title role of *Butterfly*. Engagements during the 2000-01 season have included *Butterfly*, *Il Trovatore* and *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Met; *Attila* in Geneva and Frankfurt; *Ballo* in Berlin and Vienna; *Trovatore* in Zurich and Madrid; also *Aida* in Amsterdam. In concert, Crider has performed at the Salzburg, Maggio Musicale, Orange, Edinburgh and Ravenna Festivals, Frankfurt Alte Oper, Salle Pleyel and London's Barbican, performing with Europe's foremost orchestras. Her recordings include *Un Ballo in Maschera* under Carlo Rizzi, *Mefistofele* (Elena/Margherita) conducted by Riccardo Muti, and the Verdi Requiem with Richard Hickox. In the future, the Illinois native will make role debuts as Elvira in *Ernani* (Oviedo) and in the title role of *Norma* (Antwerp).



Soprano **NORMA FANTINI** has appeared in most of the leading opera houses in her native Italy including La Scala in Milan (title role/*Manon Lescaut*; Margherita/*Mefistofele*; Leonora/*La Forza del Destino*), Teatro Regio in Turin, Teatro Massimo in Palermo (title role/*Tosca*), the San Carlo in Naples (Amelia/*Un Ballo in Maschera*), the Rome Opera (Maddalena/*Andrea Chénier*), Ravenna

Festival, Spoleto and the Arena di Verona. Among other highlights (U.S. debut at the Lyric Opera of Chicago with *Chénier*, Desdemona in *Otello* in Madrid, Macerata and Palermo), she has performed the title role of *Aida* to great acclaim for her debuts at the Metropolitan Opera and the Deutsche Staatsoper in Berlin, as well as in Madrid, Tokyo, Verona, Palermo, Baltimore and London, among others. Upcoming engagements include *Manon Lescaut* at the Palafenice in Venice, her first Mozart role, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, at the Berlin Staatsoper, *Tosca* in Dresden and Tokyo, also *Aida* in Brussels, Verona and Macerata. A graduate of the Verdi Conservatory in Cuneo, she was the winner of the Viotti Competition, the A. Belli Competition and the Callas scholarship.



Russian contralto **LARISSA DIADKOVA**, considered one of the outstanding artists to emerge from post-Soviet Russia, made her 1994 San Francisco Opera debut portraying the Fortuneteller and Mother Superior in *The Fiery Angel* and returned in 1998 to sing the Duenna in *Betrothal in a Monastery*. Diadkova studied at the Leningrad Conservatory before joining the Maryinsky Theater (Kirov

Opera), where her repertoire includes Ratmir (*Ruslan and Lyudmila*), Konchakovna (*Prince Igor*), Olga (*Eugene Onegin*), Marfa (*Khovanshchina*), Nezhatia (*Sadko*), Paulina (*The Queen of Spades*), Lyubov (*Mazeppa*), Kashcheyevna (*Kashchei the Immortal*), the Duenna (*Betrothal*), in addition to two of her

signature roles: Azucena in *Il Trovatore* and Amneris in *Aida*. As a member of the Kirov, as well as a concert and recital artist, she has toured throughout the world and has appeared in many of the world's foremost concert halls and opera houses. Her recordings include *The Love for Three Oranges*, *Betrothal*, *Iolanta*, *Ruslan*, *The Fiery Angel*, *Sadko*, *Kashchei*, *Mazeppa*, Mahler's Third Symphony, as well as Shostakovich's *Krilev Fables* and *From Jewish Folk Poetry*. Diadkova also appears on videos of *Boris Godunov* under Yuri Temirkanov, *Boris Godunov* and *Sadko* led by Valery Gergiev, and on *Welcome Back to St. Petersburg*, a Kirov Opera concert filmed in London. She will soon perform and record *Mistress Quickly* in *Falstaff* with the Berlin Philharmonic, in a production to be staged at the Salzburg Festival.



Soprano **TAMMY JENKINS**, a former Adler Fellow, made her bow with San Francisco Opera as Frasquita in *Carmen* during the 1998 *Femmes Fatales* Festival. She has subsequently performed here in *Manon*, *Don Carlo* and *Peter Grimes* during the 1998-99 Season, also in *Louise*, *La Favorite* and *La Bohème* (one performance as Musetta) the following season.

A native of Las Cruces, the soprano attended New Mexico State University and has performed in productions of *Tartuffe* (Marianne), *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (the Mother), and *Carmen* (Micaëla). Jenkins was a Metropolitan Opera Southwestern Regional Finalist in 1996 and received a special award at the 1997 Met Auditions. A 1997 Merola Opera Program participant, she sang the role of Frasquita in the summer staging of *Carmen* and went on to repeat the role and also sing Micaëla in Western Opera Theater's national touring production. Additional credits include a Schwabacher Debut Recital, Showcase presentations of *Iphigénie en Tauride* (First Priestess) and *Così fan tutte* (Despina), as well as concerts with the Midsummer Mozart Festival, Napa Valley Symphony and S.F.'s Other Minds Festival.



A highly sought-after tenor on the international scene, **RICHARD MARGISON** first performed with San Francisco Opera in 1992 in the title role of *Don Carlo*. He has since appeared with the Company as Faust in *Mefistofele* (1994), Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* (1995), Cavaradossi in *Tosca* (1997), Calaf in *Turandot* (1998) and again as Don Carlo (1999). He began his career with appearances at the leading opera centers of his native Canada and

quickly gained recognition after his 1989 European debut with the English National Opera as Riccardo in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. He has subsequently performed at most of the major opera houses of the world and in concert with several prestigious orchestras. Among his most recent engagements are *Aida* (Radames, one of his signature roles), *Mefistofele* (Faust), *Turandot* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* (his first Bacchus) at the Metropolitan Opera; *Tosca* in Amsterdam and Torre del Lago; *Il Trovatore* (Manrico) in San Diego and Sydney; *Attila* (Foresto) for the Lyric Opera of Chicago; *Otello* (title role) in Brussels; *Andrea Chénier* (title role) in Geneva; as well as *Aida* for the Netherlands Opera and San Diego Opera. In concert, Margison has been heard at the Ravinia Festival, with the Royal Philharmonic in London, as well as with the symphonies of San Francisco, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and Brussels. His recordings include Tchaikovsky's *Mazeppa* led by Neeme Järvi, *Don Carlos* under Bernard Haitink, a disc of French and Italian arias, and a collection of rarities by Rossini and Verdi.



STEPHAN PYATNYCHKO made his 1996 European debut in the title role of *Rigoletto* at the Geneva Opera and the following year made his U.S. operatic bow as Count di Luna in Baltimore Opera's staging of *Il Trovatore*. The Ukrainian baritone's subsequent engagements include his debut at the Bregenz Festival in the title role of Rubinstein's *The Demon* (later repeated for the Konzerthaus in Vienna),

a return to Bregenz to sing Manfredo in *L'Amore Dei Tre Re* (recorded for future release), and his first Carnegie Hall appearance in Donizetti's *Adelia* with the Opera Orchestra of New York. Engagements thus far in the season have included Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Bregenz Festival, *L'Amore Dei Tre Re* for his Zurich Opera debut, and Rodrigo in *Don Carlo*, again at the Zurich Opera. Among his upcoming assignments are the title role of *Rigoletto* for San Francisco Opera and a debut with Washington Opera in a new staging of *Ballo*. Pyatnychko began his vocal studies at the Lysenko Conservatory in Lviv, and upon graduation in 1987 was engaged as a member of the Lviv State Opera (the Ivan Franko Opera and Ballet Theater) for several years. Roles performed in this house included Germont in *La Traviata*, Tonio in *Pagliacci*, Robert in *Iolanthe*, as well as the title parts of *Eugene Onegin* and Rachmaninov's *Aleko*.



PAATA BURCHULADZE made his San Francisco Opera debut as Khan Konchak in the 1996 staging of *Prince Igor*. The eminent Georgian bass, after winning first prize in the 1982 Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, quickly came to the attention of the musical world. Soon after his 1984 debut at Covent Garden as Ramfis in *Aida*, he made his bow at Milan's La Scala, where he has performed

numerous times in such operas as *Macbeth* (Banquo), *Nabucco* (Zaccaria), *I Lombardi* (Pagano), and *Aida*. In addition to many London and Milan engagements, he is also a regular guest artist at the Vienna State Opera, where he was heard as Boris Godunov and as Prince Ivan Khovansky in *Khovanshchina*. Other highlights include *Boris Godunov* at the Munich State Opera; *Turandot* at the Arena di Verona; *Nabucco* as part of La Scala's tour to Japan; *Don Giovanni* at the Salzburg Festival and, in the U.S., performances at the Metropolitan Opera (*Aida*, *Khovanshchina*), Washington Opera and the Opera Company of Philadelphia. Recent assignments have included *Boris Godunov* in Hamburg; *Don Carlo* in Munich (Grand Inquisitor) and Washington, D.C. (King Philip); as well as *Aida* in Athens. He also has a busy schedule on the concert platform and regularly performs in recital at the world's major musical centers. In addition to many opera recordings, both audio and video, Burchuladze has numerous solo albums to his credit. He has been honored with the title of "Kammersänger" by the Staatstheater Stuttgart and was given the title of "Prince" by the Russian Orthodox Church for his services to Russia and to music.



Bass **RAYMOND ACETO**, a graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Young Artist Development Program, has appeared at the Met numerous times since his debut in *Tosca* during the 1992-93 season. The Ohio-born artist has performed several roles with the Lyric Opera of Chicago including the High Priest in *Nabucco*, Banquo in *Macbeth*, Nourabad in *Pêcheurs des Perles* and Pistola in *Falstaff*. He has been seen at Dallas Opera in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Basilio), *Das Rheingold* (Fasolt) and *La Bohème* (Colline). He sang his first Daland in *Der Fliegende Holländer* for the Canadian Opera Company, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* with Santa Fe Opera, Rocco in *Fidelio* with the COC, Ratcliff in *Billy Budd* with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and Monterone in

Rigoletto for his 1997 San Francisco Opera debut. Among his most recent engagements are *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Raimondo) for Seattle Opera, *Barbiere* in Dallas and Chicago, in addition to *Siegfried* (Fafner) in Dallas. Aceto can be heard on recordings of *The Rake's Progress* conducted by Seiji Ozawa and *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* led by Donald Runnicles.



A two-year Adler Fellow (1999-2000), **TODD GEER** made his San Francisco Opera debut last season, appearing in *La Favorite* (Don Gaspar), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Normanno), *Nabucco* (Abdallo), *Idomeneo* (High Priest), *La Bohème* (one performance as Rodolfo) and *Parsifal* (Third Esquire). Earlier in our current season he was seen in *Semele* (Apollo), *Der Rosenkavalier* (Italian

Tenor) and *Die Zauberflöte* (First Armored Man). The tenor has also performed in Opera Center's Showcase productions of *Così fan tutte* (1999, Ferrando) and *Albert Herring* (2000, title role). He participated in the 1998 Western Opera Theater national tour of *La Traviata*, in which he sang the role of Alfredo. Prior to that he appeared as Don José in the 1997 WOT tour of *Carmen*. After his professional opera debut with Syracuse Opera, the tenor was named a resident artist with Tri-Cities (Binghamton, N.Y.) Opera where he was heard as Rodolfo, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* and in the title role of *Faust*. He recently made his debut with the Lyric Opera of Chicago in *Salome* and his European debut in Paris and Geneva as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*. In concert, the young artist has been heard in *Carmina Burana*, *Messiah*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, Schubert's Mass in F and Bruckner's *Te Deum*. Geer holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music and Binghamton University and is a former voice instructor at Cornell University.



ERIC HOISINGTON began his training at the Modern Dance Department of the North Carolina School of the Arts and subsequently studied at the Houston Ballet Academy. After opening The Wortham Theater Center as the featured dancer in Houston Grand Opera's production of *Aida*, he traveled to New York to work with Mark Dendy, Zvi Gotheiner and numerous companies. Hoisington was in the original cast of *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*

before joining the San Francisco Ballet, with whom he danced for eight years before joining Alonzo King's LINES company. He has also appeared as the Emcee in Albert Takazaukas's San Francisco staging of *Cabaret*, principal dancer in Margo Sappington's production of *Song and Dance* at Miami's Coconut Grove Playhouse, the "Christ figure" in the Millennium Arts production of Handel's *Messiah*, as well as in several galas and AIDS benefits. He was the 1994 recipient of the Isadora Duncan Award for individual performance.



PATRICK SUMMERS, Music Director at Houston Grand Opera and the Company's Principal Guest Conductor, has had a close association with San Francisco Opera since 1989. The acclaimed artist served as Music Director of the Opera Center from 1990-1994 and made his Company conducting debut in 1990 with *Die Fledermaus*. He has since led a large repertoire of SFO productions ranging from *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (in his own realization) to Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, as well as the world premiere of Heggie and McNally's *Dead Man Walking*. Maestro Summers has numerous credits for the various programs of the Opera Center — Showcase presentations,

Merola Opera Program productions, and Western Opera Theater tours. Elsewhere, he has led productions at Houston Grand Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, Lisbon's Teatro Nacional São Carlos, Rome Opera, Opera Australia, Dallas Opera, Opéra de Bordeaux and Seattle Opera, among others. Among his most recent engagements are *L'Elisir d'Amore* for the Company; *La Favorite* in Bordeaux; *Così fan tutte*, Catán's *Florence en el Amazonas* and *Don Carlos* in Houston; as well as *Così* at the Met. Future assignments include *Of Mice and Men* in Houston and at the Bregenz Festival; the first European staging of *Streetcar* at Strasbourg's Opéra du Rhin; in addition to *Rigoletto* and the world premiere of Mark Adamo's *Lysistrata* at Houston Grand Opera. On record, Summers is represented by a disc of arias and duets with Olga Borodina and Dmitri Hvorostovsky, with a CD of bel canto arias featuring Renée Fleming and the Orchestra of St. Luke's set for future release. The artist was named "Outstanding Young San Franciscan" by the S.F. Chamber of Commerce in 1991 and in 1997 was honored as one of the Stolichnaya Artists of the Year.



Staff Conductor at San Francisco Opera since 1998, **WILLIAM LACEY** has conducted performances of *La Bobème*, *The Tsar's Bride*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Semele* and *Die Zauberflöte* in the War Memorial Opera House. For the San Francisco Opera Center, he has conducted new productions of *Così fan tutte*, *The Italian Girl in Algiers* and *Albert Herring*. Born in London, he

studied at Winchester College and at King's College, Cambridge, where he conducted many orchestral concerts and operas (debut: *The Rape of Lucretia*, 1993). In 1998, his first commercial recording was released: Alexander Goehr's new opera *Arianna*. Since joining the Company, Lacey's activities have included assisting Music Director Donald Runnicles (*Tristan und Isolde*, *Peter Grimes*, Wagner's *Ring*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Idomeneo*, *Parsifal*) and assisting guest conductors such as Valery Gergiev, Richard Bonyngue, Patrick Summers and Charles Mackerras. He also appeared in the role of Lazinski, the Polish pianist, in the *Fedora* portion of the 2000 *Viva! Domingo* Gala. Lacey will soon relinquish his position with the Company in order to pursue a freelance conducting career.



PAULA WILLIAMS made her San Francisco Opera debut in 1991 directing *Die Zauberflöte* and staged our new production of *Aida* at the Civic Auditorium in 1997. She has also directed S.F. Opera productions of *La Traviata*, *Andrea Chénier* and *Carmen*, as well as Opera Center productions of *Così fan tutte* and *La Périochole*. She made her 1996 debut at the Lyric Opera of Chicago where

she staged *Andrea Chénier*. In 1995 she traveled to St. Petersburg, Russia, to assist Lotfi Mansouri on a San Francisco Opera/Kirov Opera co-production of Glinka's *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, and later staged the work for the Metropolitan Opera's 1998 Kirov Festival. Williams has also worked with the Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Andrea Chénier*), Opera Company of Philadelphia (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), and Edmonton Opera (*Carmen*, *The Magic Flute*). Additional directing engagements include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Lake George Opera; *The Barber of Seville* for Skylight Opera Theatre; *Turandot* with Utah Opera; a remounting of *Iphigénie en Tauride* with New York City Opera; a revival of *Pelleas et Mélisande* at the Met; as well as *Norma*, *Roméo et Juliette* and *Madama Butterfly* at Hawaii Opera Theatre. Later this season she will stage *The Marriage of Figaro* at Wolf Trap and *Falstaff* for San Francisco Opera.



DOUGLAS W. SCHMIDT has designed for Broadway, the New York Shakespeare Festival, Repertory Theatre of Lincoln Center, WNET-New York, San Francisco Opera, New York City Opera and for many other organizations. For the Company, he created the sets for *Aida* (1981, '84, '89), as well as the designs for the world premiere of Imbrie's *Angle of Repose* (1976) and *Samson et Dalila* (1980, '83). Of the over 200 productions designed by Schmidt in the past 30 years, many were created for several regional theaters in the U.S. His work for the theater includes the award-winning designs for Gorky's *Enemies* at the Vivian Beaumont Theatre (where he was resident designer from 1969-'73), as well as the Andrews Sisters' musical *Over Here!* and Ira Levin's *Veronica's Room*, both honored with Drama Desk Awards. Among his many other Broadway credits are Neil Simon's *They're Playing Our Song*, Bernard Slade's *Romantic Comedy*, Sondheim and Furth's *Getting Away with Murder*, *Smile*, the original production of *Grease*, *The Civil War*, the now legendary *Frankenstein* (it closed on opening night) and the recent revival of *42nd Street* (Tony nominee, Scenic Design). His designs were seen in last year's feature film adaptation of the musical *The Fantasticks*.



American designer **LAWRENCE CASEY** created the costumes for *Aida*, a production first seen here during the 1981 Fall Season and repeated in 1984, 1989 and 1997. His association with San Francisco Opera goes back to 1973, when he assisted Jane Greenwood on the Company's first production of *La Favorita*. The following year he worked with Beni Montresor on the costumes for *The Daughter of the Regiment*, and in 1976 won praise for the costume designs for the world premiere of Andrew Imbrie's *Angle of Repose*. He also designed the costumes for the 1981 Spring Opera Theater productions of John Eaton's *The Cry of Clytemnestra* and Monteverdi's *Il Ballo delle Ingrate*. He has designed for numerous regional theaters, including the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, the American Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford, Connecticut, and the McCarter Theatre in Princeton. His designs for the dance group Crownrest have been seen on PBS as well as at New York's Public Theater. He designed the costumes for an Obie-winning Off-Broadway adaptation of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, and provided the costume designs for the Obie-winning production of Virgil Thomson's *The Mother of Us All*. Casey recently designed the costumes for Gerald Freedman's staging of *Richard II* (set in 1930's England) in Washington, D.C.



CHRISTIAN HOLDER made his San Francisco Opera choreographic debut with the 1981 staging of *The Merry Widow*. Prior to that, he was a featured dancer in our productions of *La Gioconda* (1979), *Samson et Dalila* (1980) and *Aida* (1981), all three subjects of national telecasts. A leading artist with the Joffrey Ballet from 1966 to 1979, Holder has choreographed and designed costumes for the Joffrey, Washington Ballet, Ballet Concierto de Puerto Rico, Ballet Théâtre de Bordeaux and American Ballet Theatre, as well as for ballerinas Martine van Hamel and Valentina Kozlova. His costumes for Margo Sappington's ballet *Toulouse-Lautrec* (commissioned by the Ballet du Capitole in Toulouse) were recently displayed at the Toulouse-Lautrec Museum in Albi, France. Holder's performing career began when he was a child in London, where he appeared in repertory theater, on the television series "The Avengers", in a BBC production of *Moby Dick* directed by Orson Welles, and with the company "Boscoe Holder and his Caribbean Dancers."



IAN ROBERTSON, chorus director and conductor at the San Francisco Opera since 1987, made his Company conducting debut with the 1988 production of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and has since led performances of *Falstaff*, *Lobengrin*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *Don Carlo*, *Turandot*, *Il Trovatore* and *La Bohème*. In addition to his highly praised work with the Opera Chorus, he has led the Opera

Orchestra and Chorus in many concerts. Additional assignments include Opera Center's productions of *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, *Così fan tutte*, *La Pêricbole* and *The Elixir of Love*, as well as Merola Opera Program's Grand Finale Concerts. He has also led *Don Giovanni* for Sarasota Opera; *The Magic Flute* and *Rigoletto* for Edmonton Opera; also numerous operas at Philadelphia's Curtis Opera Theatre where he most recently led Barber's *Vanessa*. Before joining the Company, Robertson was head of music and chorus director of Scottish Opera, where he led *The Barber of Seville*, *The Secret of Susanna*, *The Pearl Fishers*, *Rigoletto*, *The Magic Flute* and *Die Meistersinger*, among others. A native of Scotland, the maestro trained as a concert pianist and accompanist at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music, subsequently graduating with honors from the University of Glasgow. His recital career led to appearances at the Edinburgh International Festival and the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room in London. He has recorded recitals for the BBC and appeared as pianist with the New Music Group of Scotland. Robertson was appointed artistic director of the San Francisco Boys Chorus in 1996.



THOMAS J. MUNN's lighting designs this season include the Company premieres of *The Tsar's Bride*, *The Ballad of Baby Doe* and *Semele*. He is also re-creating his designs for *Die Zauberflöte*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Aida* and *La Traviata*. During his tenure with the Company he has created the lighting and special effects for over 190 productions. Last season, he designed the lighting for the *Ring Festival* as well as for new productions of *La Favorite* and *Nabucco*. Credits during our 1998–99 Season include designs for *A Streetcar Named Desire* (projection and lighting design), *Don Carlo*, *Peter Grimes* and *Betrothal in a Monastery*, as well as for revivals of *Turandot* and *Tristan und Isolde*. Among his scenic design credits are productions of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1979), *Billy Budd*, *Nabucco*, *Don Giovanni* and *Christophe Colomb*. Television credits for the Company include *Streetcar* (nominated for an Emmy Award), *The Dangerous Liaisons*, *Turandot*, the Emmy Award-winning *La Gioconda*, *Aida*, *Samson et Dalila*, *La Bohème*, *Mefistofele*, *Orlando Furioso*, *L'Africaine* and *Capriccio*. Munn has also designed productions for the companies of Houston, Dallas, Washington, D.C., New Orleans, San Diego, Amsterdam, Nice and Sendai. His work in ballet has been seen at the Mary Anthony Dance Theatre, Hartford Ballet and Ballet Arizona.

Aida SUPERNUMERARIES

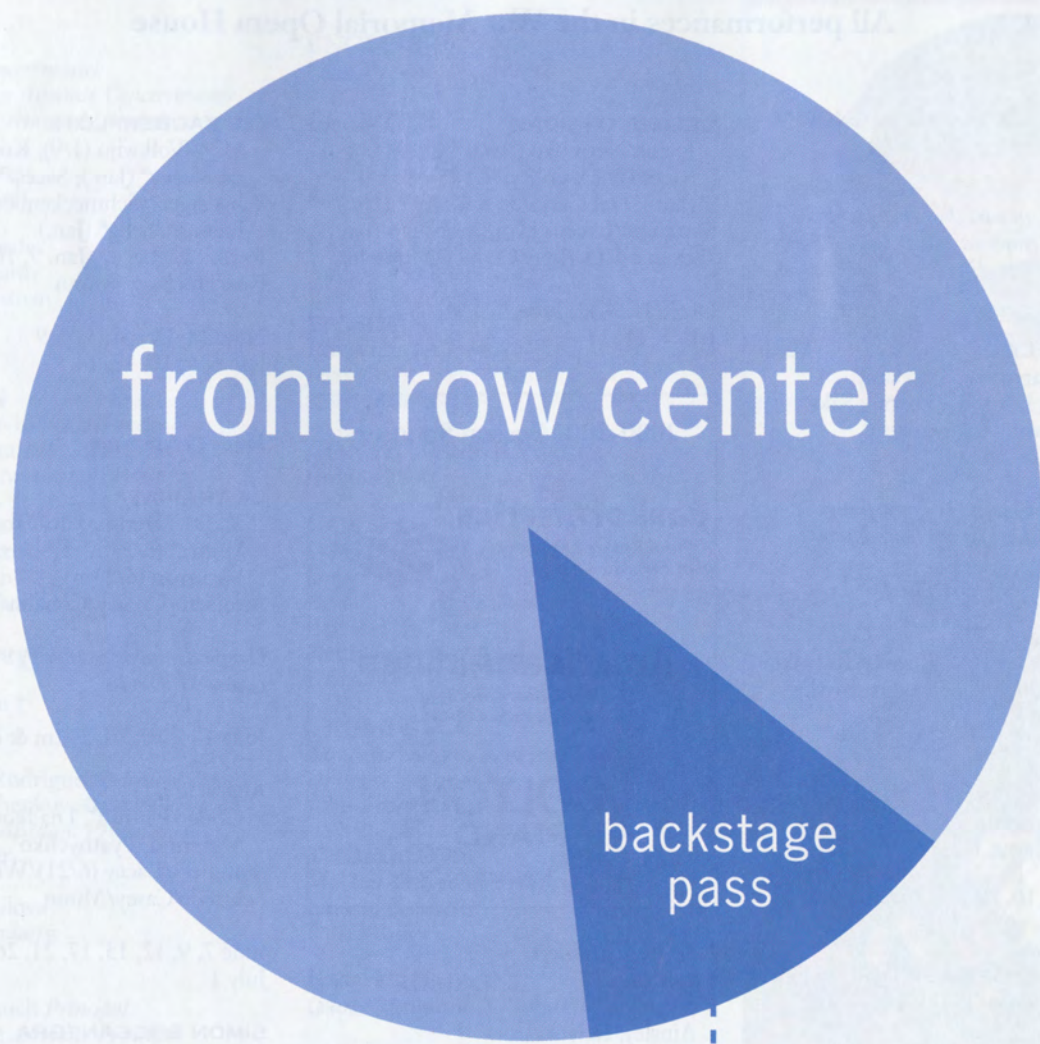
Donna Aarons
Elaine Adamson
Irene Bechtel
Annette Clark
Rose Ericson
Nancy Huie
Jenny Jirousek
Joan Kwansa
Sydney Mason
Marie McNulty
Lynn Meinhardt
Alice Offhill-Whitelaw
Barbara Sherman
Mimi Timberlake
Patti Tsai
Ann Williamson

Tom Abels
Philip Arbeit
Antenor Arenas
Robert Arnold
Jim Baaden
Tom Bajorek
Cray Bauxmont-Flynn
Mike Berkowitz
Jeff Blanchard
William Brogan

John Brown
Peter Cannon
Tom Carlisle
David Cash
Doug Ceffalo
Ali Celik
Marcus Cenicerros
Roderick Chow
Anthony Clarke
David Clover
Brian Copperstein
Gary Cramer
Al Cummings
Uwe Damerow
Dustin Di Giulio
Jim Downey
Jim Durham
Jim Dyvad
Simon Elliott-LehBohn
Bob Ericson
Rick Evans
Bjon Farber
Julian Derek Ford
Yanni Georghiu
Curtis Gong-Guy
Eddy Gordillo
John Guglielmelli

Tom Hadfield
Bradly Hamilton
Franklin Harris III
Michael Harvey
Chris Howell
Kevin Johnson
Frank Jorgensen
Keith King
Bill Klapproth
Jeff Kohler
Andrew Korniej
Andreas Kynast
Carl La Bante
Don Langley
Steve Lavezzoli
Charlie Lichtman
Mickel London
Rick Malher
Ron Mann
John F. Martin
John R. Martin
Gilbert Martinez
McCabe Mattingly
Bruce McNaughton
John Mendieta
Jim Miller
Ed Mitchell

David Norton
Kurt Norton
Larry O'Connor
Robert J. O'Connor
William Perasso
Michael Peredo
Jeff Piade
David Ransom
David Robinson
Lawrence Saez
René Schaub
Larry Severino
Brandon Shald
Mark Sommerfield
Frank Sommers
Nelson Sproul
Jeff Staben
Ralph Stevenson
Bob Stroman
Stanley Strosser
Walt Thorp
Marvin Tom
Lord Veerman
Matthew Vierling
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vexing performance problems in all opera. Radames's final high B-flat is approached over orchestral trills and arpeggios all in *pianissimo* and *pianississimo*. The last words of his *romanza* — "*Un trono vicino al sol*" — are set as a crescendo over five measures, but it is a crescendo from *pppp* to *pp*, in addition to which Verdi asks for a diminishing for the penultimate phrase and writes *morendo* over the last one. Almost no tenor can manage this unless in unsoldierly head voice, and even if one could: what? not end *Celeste Aida* with a ringing, virile, *fortissimo* B-flat? Forget it. I once heard a tenor who sang Verdi's *pianissimo morendo* booed by an audience at the Metropolitan Opera. An alternative concocted by Verdi himself — *fortissimo* high B-flat, then dropping quietly to the B-flat an octave below — sounds like the desperate makeshift it is (you can hear Richard Tucker make the best of it in the recording of the 1949 broadcast conducted by Toscanini). It seems an insoluble problem.

In the Triumphal Scene, Radames again shows his tender side when he asks the King to release the Ethiopian prisoners. In the Nile scene, we meet him as a more primitive creature, again in the thrall of unlikely visions for his and Aida's future, reckless with giving military secrets away, and, when it comes to the crunch, thinking only about himself as he obsessively repeats "*Io son disonorato!*" His finest moment comes in Act IV. He is at last certain who he is, certain that Aida matters more to him than country and career, and neither the wildly impassioned addresses of Amneris nor the priests' hieratic challenges — "*Discolpati!*" — on ever-rising pitches can sway him. His silence is his most eloquent moment. It is also symbolic of the quiet of this opera.

The next significant character we meet is Amneris. The realities of operatic production can make us forget who she truly is: not just the heavy who gets in the way of the tenor's and soprano's love affair, but a woman who has everything: youth, beauty, political power. But these are not enough to get her the man she desires. She and Aida are the same age, and she is more beautiful than her slave, one more reason it enrages her so that she cannot get Radames's attention. It is unjust: Even aesthetically, as Thomas Mann points out with a perfectly gauged mixture of sympathy and irony in the "Fullness of Harmony" chapter in *The Magic Mountain*, her sumptuous mezzo with its glorious, seductive register break, ought to conquer Radames. X loves Y, although agonizingly aware that Y does not love X: It is one of the most wretched positions for a human being to be trapped in — and surely not unknown to some of you reading these lines.

Amneris is a peach of a role, too. It is

nearly impossible to fail in it (Eva Gustavson on the Toscanini recording comes close, though), but the truly great ones who fill the part entirely — two I think of are Rita Gorr, whom I was lucky enough to experience on stage, and Irene Minghini-Cattaneo on the 1928 recording from La Scala — leave scars. If I could assume any gender or voice for a role in *Aida*, Amneris is what I would go for. Her music covers huge expressive ground: sly with Radames at the beginning, honeyed with Aida, flashes of triumph in her entrapment of her slave, wild abandon and loss of all royal decorum in her tempest of sexual jealousy. But at the end, as Aida and Radames sing their sweet and *pianissimo* *Liebestod* with its aching major sevenths ("*O terra...*"), Amneris, praying ("*Pace, pace t'imploro*"), is reduced to a monotone. She will walk away, out of the temple, but she is as surely entombed, as surely a victim of the priestly hierarchy, as her slave and the man she could not make her lover and husband.

Aida herself, a princess enslaved, is submissive, cautious, tormented. She also emits an extraordinary erotic radiance. She loves Radames and both because of that and because she cannot publicly afford not to, she joins in the mass acclamation of Radames as he goes off to war. *Ritorna vincitor!*: She is in anguish at having betrayed her country by adding her voice. What a wonderful musical moment that is, so simple, so Verdian. Amneris is the one to hail Radames's coming victory: "May he return victorious!" The crowd echoes her phrase, but a third higher, and rising to a brilliant high A. And moments later, left alone on stage, Aida bitterly repeats "*Ritorna vincitor!*" at Amneris's pitch, but in minor, going to F-natural rather than F-sharp. The *scena* that follows, so acutely sensitive to Aida's careening mood, is one of the most original pages Verdi ever penned.

Ritorna vincitor! is the moment when Aida comes closest to expressing her passion without inhibition. Yes, she finally sacrifices herself in order to die in the tomb at Radames's side, but her ruling passion is for her country. Her most inward music is the great soliloquy, *O patria mia*, that she sings by the banks of the Nile in Act III. It is a meditative song, and the high C at its climax is *dolce*: ecstasy and pain in deep quiet. For me, the most beautiful music in the opera, all but unbearably beautiful, comes in the duet with Amonasro, when Aida resolves that she will be a true daughter to her father and her country — "*Padre, a costoro schiava no son*" — her words *sotto voce* and "covered" (*cupa*); violas, cellos, and bassoon singing their yearning, pleading melody; violins, their pitch rising, rising, but quadruple *piano*, portraying the beating of an anguished heart.

E. M. Forster once said that if it came

to a choice between betraying his country and betraying his friend, he hoped he would betray his country. Radames takes that path, first involuntarily, when he realizes that Amonasro has with Aida's connivance overheard his confidence to Aida about the route of the Egyptian army, but then by conviction. He has, at the end, more strength and purpose than he or we realized. Forster's choice is not for Aida. Naturally she hesitates when Amonasro puts it to her that she must entrap Radames, but for this vulnerable, ever unsure, in-over-her-head young woman, the choice is clear: It is for the country from which she was brutally torn. Being an Ethiopian is what most defines Aida — exile can do that to you — and her love of *patria* is what she most intensely feels. She, too, however, finds another sort of strength at the end as she resolves to join Radames in death and as she is the one to lead their final, their too-late love duet.

Aida is a wonderfully rewarding role, and mercilessly difficult. It is intensely emotional, but unlike Amneris, Aida does not get to vent and rage and roar: hers, except for moments, is essentially an inward and *pianissimo* presence, and that is taxing psychically as well as technically. In recent decades, Leontyne Price owned the role. She sang her first Aida ever on this stage in 1957 and chose it for her farewell to the operatic stage in 1985. Hers was a deeply considered and deeply felt interpretation, and her singing of it was miraculous, and I mean no disrespect to that treasured artist if I suggest that an even greater performance — equal in feeling, intelligence, and musicianship, plus an even wider coloristic range and the advantage of singing in her own language — is to be heard from Giannina Arangi-Lombardi on another recording made at La Scala in 1928.

Amonasro, one in a long succession of baritone fathers in Verdi, is a brief role, but a crucial one. As a prisoner of war, he arouses our sympathy, and we are impressed by the boldness with which he addressed the Pharaoh in what is some of *Aida's* loveliest lyric music. In the Nile Scene, we see and hear him as determined and capable, both of which he must be as king and commander-in-chief, but also as a bully who weighs in on his hapless daughter with ruthless psychological blackmail. But here, too, some of the most meltingly beautiful music is his, and for all of the brevity of the role, Verdi has succeeded in creating a personality of fascinating complexity.

The more we listen to *Aida*, especially the more we are privileged to listen to it in the hands of subtle and imaginative artists, the more surely we come to feel the richness that Verdi has imposed on so simple a story. That Prelude is full of promise of wonders, and what comes after it is glorious fulfillment. □

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On November 12, 2000, friends and family of Paul Sherrill gathered at his Potrero Hill home, just days after attending the annual opera party (for which Paul was famous) to say goodbye. The night of the party had been filled with joy and camaraderie, accentuated by Paul's always-remarkable cooking and the splendors of his Mexican folk art collection. But the next morning, November 5, quietly and peacefully, Paul passed away.

Paul and his wife, Anne Hummel Sherrill (d.1990) were great lovers of and longtime subscribers to the San Francisco Opera. The pleasure of their work (Paul as noted Bay Area architect and community planner, Anne as author and Mills College professor of History) went hand-in-hand with their love of the arts, travel, cooking, and their many friends and colleagues.

It is with the warmest of memories that we remember Paul and Anne within the pages of this program, which celebrates the opera they loved so much.

Donations in memory of the Sherrills may be made to:

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AIDA'S EGYPT continued from page 15



The outer court of the Temple of Isis at Philae is flanked by two great rows of columns topped with images of the goddess Hathor. The western colonnade shown here comprises 32 columns, of which no two are exactly alike.

offerings that would ensure continuance of the order of things.

Viewed from the side, a typical Egyptian temple looks strange. Why bother with the soaring protective pylons, for instance, when the side wall immediately adjacent is only a fraction of its height? The answer seems clear if we compare an Egyptian temple to an 18th-century opera set. Comprising a series of flat planes in painted perspective, Baroque opera sets were designed to be most effective when viewed from one spot — the so-called Prince's Seat. Similarly, an Egyptian temple is meant to be viewed by one person: the Pharaoh or High Priest as he advances along the main axis. At each point of transition, the floor is raised slightly and the roof is lowered, creating a powerful psychological effect; one advances from the brightness of the open court into the sudden darkness of the hypostyle hall. By the time the Holy of Holies is reached, the primary illumination upon the god's image is the shaft of sunlight penetrating from the temple's distant entrance. The effect this had on the officiating priest must have been indescribable.

But this sort of solitary ritual does not lend itself to stage representation, and if Mariette knew the true nature of temple worship, he was not concerned with portraying it accurately. Equally inaccurate is his notion of a criminal being interred alive within the bowels of an Egyptian temple, an idea he dreamed up after helping to excavate the sloping vaults at the Serapeum, where the embalmed bodies of the sacred Apis bulls were kept.

Yet if Mariette's settings were anachronistically scrambled in time and widely separated by geography, they did serve another purpose for the ambitious

French Egyptologist, who understood well the impact of the unprecedented publicity the impending world premiere could have. In essence, Mariette constructed the first guided tour of Egypt's antiquities, beginning, as most tourists do to this day, in the environs of Cairo and the Pyramids (Act I), progressing south to the temples of Karnak and Luxor at Thebes (Act II), and ultimately further south to the vicinity of Aswan, Philae and Abu-Simbel (Act III) before returning to Cairo (Memphis, Act IV) for a final departure.

Two years after the internationally scrutinized premiere of *Aida*, an English romance novelist and journalist named Amelia B. Edwards followed in the footsteps of such famous tourists as Mark Twain and Florence Nightingale by taking one of the early and physically challenging tours of Egypt's monuments. This trip led to her 1877 publication of *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile*, an international best-seller that made Egypt a point of interest for countless thousands during the Victorian era.

Today *Aida* continues to serve as an impetus for Egyptian tourism. In recent years the Cairo Opera has annually produced an epic outdoor staging for tourists, first at the temple of Hatshepsut at El-Dier el-Bahari, more recently before the Great Pyramids of Giza. The success of these performances, along with such disparate events as the current Elton John Broadway musical based on *Aida*, or the recent release of the special-effects-laden film *The Mummy Returns*, proves that the interest in Egypt Mariette worked to stimulate 130 years ago, like the monuments that inspired him, has endured. □

Aida

Photos taken in rehearsal
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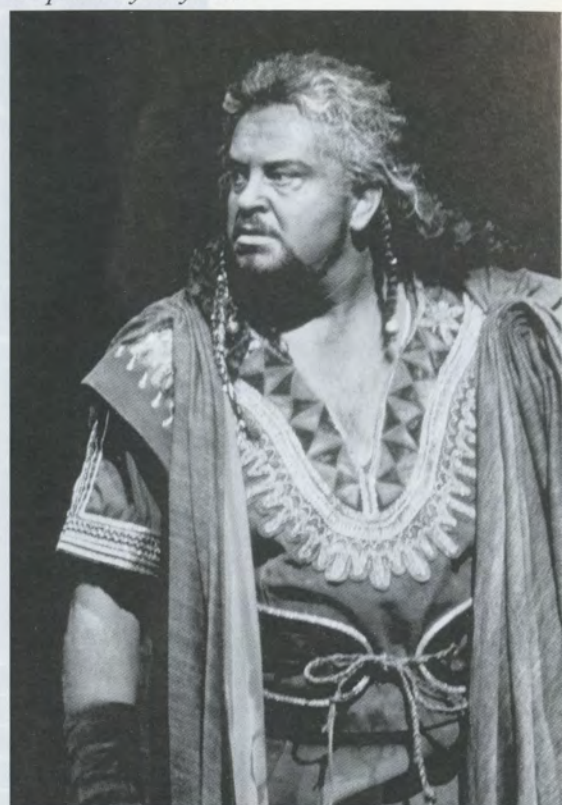


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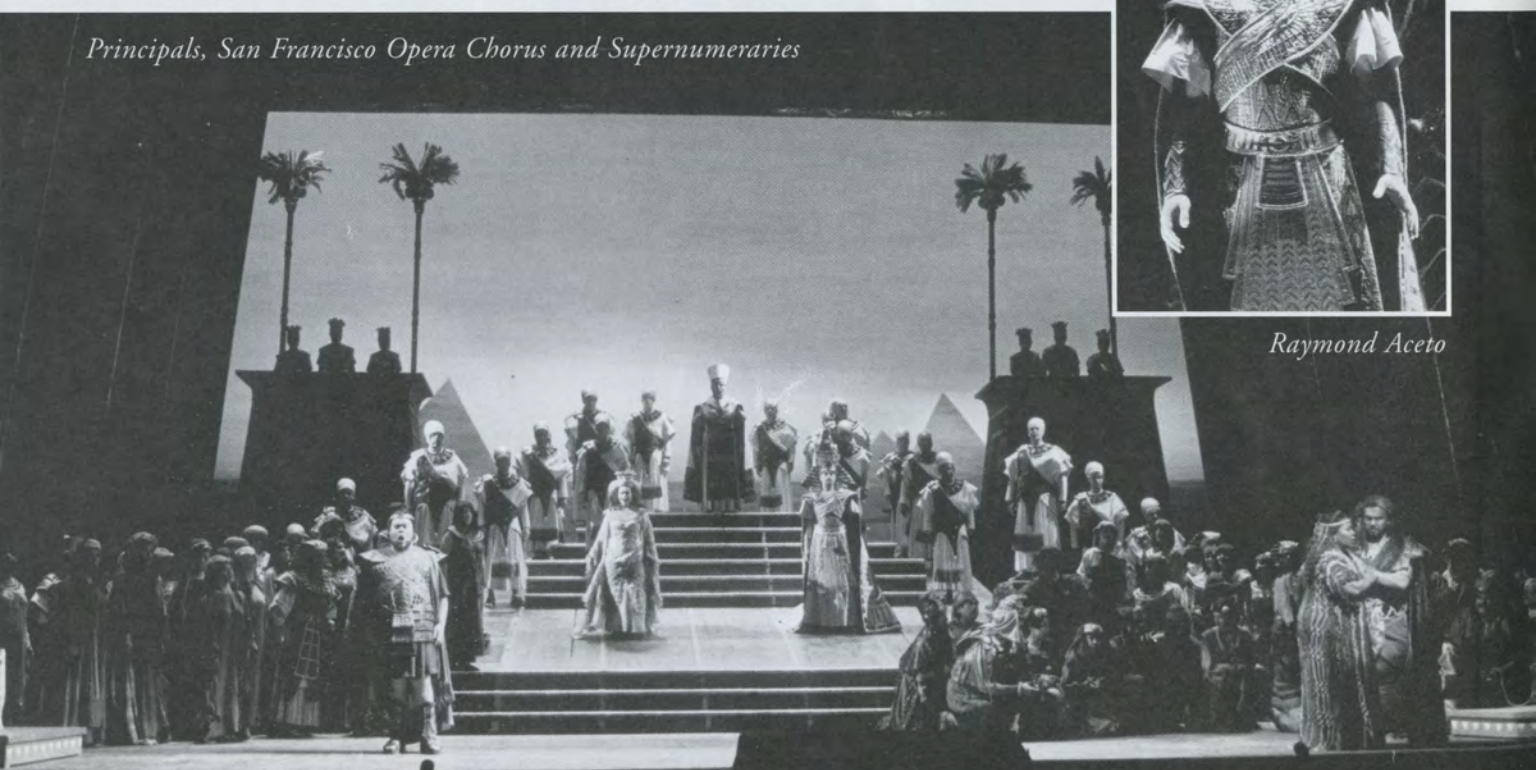


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Los Angeles Gala September 11 to 16, 2001

Highlights include Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades* with Plácido Domingo and Galina Gorchakova, Wagner's *Lohengrin* with Adrienne Pieczonka and Gösta Winbergh, and post-opera parties with singers. We'll visit the Getty, the Norton Simon, and the Huntington Museums and the exquisite Greene and Greene Gamble House, and enjoy a private recital at Sherwin's Hollywood Hills home with Los Angeles Opera artists. This will be a tour to remember!

Spectacular Autumn and Opera in New York September 23 to 30, 2001

Join Sherwin Sloan for *A Verdi Celebration*, the Met's Season Opening Gala with Plácido Domingo, Neil Shicoff, Angela Gheorghiu, Roberto Alagna, and more. We'll also attend *Eugene Onegin*, *Wozzeck* and *Idomeneo* at the Met, and *The Flying Dutchman*, *The Capulets and the Montagues* and *The Magic Flute* at New York City Opera! All this and a tour of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, visits with artists, and tickets to Mel Brooks' *The Producers*.

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Verdi Goes to the Movies

June 1-7

Landmark's Park Theater, Menlo Park
Details and schedule: sffs.org

Verdi Centenary Symposium

June 2, 10am - 3pm

University of California at Berkeley
Morrison Hall, Rom 125 (Elkus Room)
Free to the public

Verdi and the Art of the Italian Song

June 13, 7:30pm

Featured are S.F. Opera Adler Fellows and
Guests
Herbst Theater
Tickets: \$15-25

Verdi by the Bay

May 1 - August 18

Exhibit curated by the San Francisco Per-
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Verdi at San Francisco Opera

June 6 - July 1

Lobby, War Memorial Opera House
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Verdi web portal: sfopera.com

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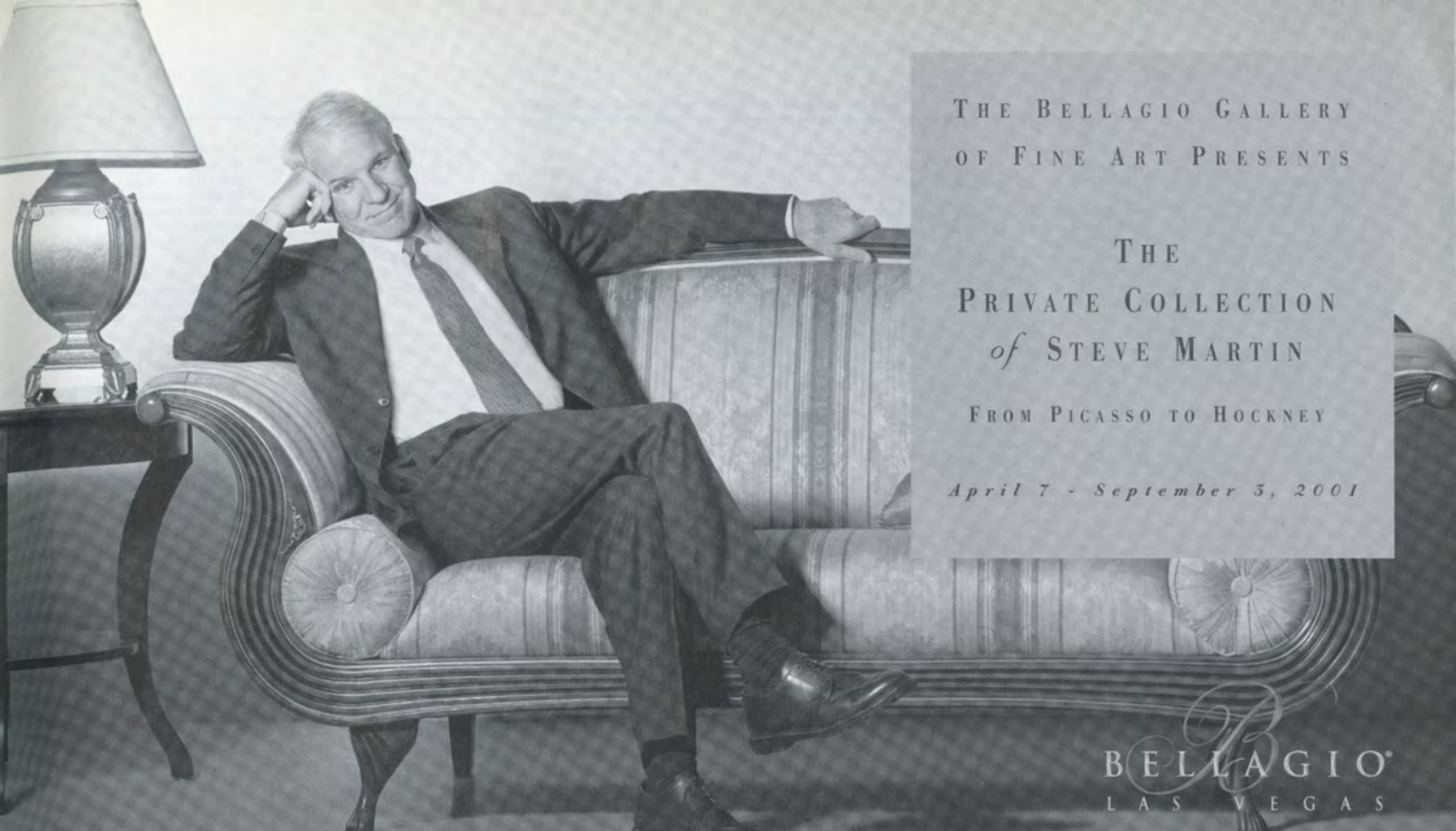
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Aida — June 9, 17, 21, 26, 29; July 1

Simon Boccanegra — June 19, 22, 24, 27

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June 12 *Simon Boccanegra*

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EAST BAY CHAPTER—

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June 6 *Verdi's Golden Legacy*

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Lectures held at 8:00 p.m., preceded by complimentary refreshments. Mt. Tamalpais United Methodist Church, 410 Sycamore Avenue, Mill Valley. Admission: \$7-adults, \$6-students and seniors (except Verdi Lecture, \$10). Series: \$35-adults, \$30-students and seniors. For information call Verna Parino (415) 388-6789.

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Continued on page 58

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Corporate Council members receive invitations to exclusive special events throughout the year which offer a unique and prime opportunity for entertaining, networking, and gaining an insider's glance into opera production.

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Employees of Corporate Council Investors and above are invited to participate in an exclusive Corporate Employee Discount Subscription Ticket program.

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All partners receive recognition in the Corporate Council section of every program magazine, reaching more than 284,000 patrons. Some partnerships offer special publicity opportunities which may include acknowledgment (or logo placement) in press releases or on ticket brochures, ticket envelopes, lobby signs, special event invitations, program inserts, radio spots, newspaper ads, and more.

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For more information contact Judson Gregory, Director of Corporate Partnerships, at (415) 565-3206 or jgregory@sfoopera.com.

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continued from page 53

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OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

Given by Michael Barclay, director of
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Series began on September 5; lectures
are \$15 at the door. Information: (510)
526-5244.

June 4 *Aida*
June 11 *Simon Boccanegra*

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The Opera Center is the Research & Development wing of San Francisco Opera, a training ground for the world's most promising opera artists. One of ten such professional artist development programs in the world, the Opera Center serves over 100,000 people annually through a progression of artist development programs, performance opportunities, and outreach and education programs. Following training through the Center, artists perform not only at San Francisco Opera but also with major opera companies throughout the world.

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The Opera Center Showcase Series is held annually to present Adler Fellows and other Opera Center singers in repertoire not usually seen on the San Francisco Opera main stage.

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Through interactive education and outreach programs, San Francisco Opera cultivates knowledge and appreciation of opera and its component arts among students of all ages, educators and the general public, reaching nearly 50,000 people each year.

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Founded in 1977 as the San Francisco/Affiliate Artists-Opera program, the Adler Fellowship Program is a performance-oriented residency for advanced singers that offers individual training as well as roles in San Francisco Opera's international season. Under the guidance of the San Francisco Opera Center staff, the Adler Fellows, the resident artists of San Francisco Opera, are directed towards roles of increasing importance throughout their residency period and in future San Francisco Opera productions.

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SERVICES

FOOD SERVICE. The Opera House lower lounge is open one and one-half hours prior to curtain time for hot buffet service. Patrons arriving before the front doors open will be admitted at the carriage entrance. Refreshments are served in the box, grand tier, dress circle and balcony circle levels.

DIGITAL WATCHES, PAGERS, CELL PHONES. Please switch them OFF before the performance begins.

For **LOST AND FOUND** information, inquire at the cloakroom at the south end of the main lobby or call (415) 621-6600, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., Monday through Friday.

TICKET INFORMATION. Opera Box Office, 199 Grove at Van Ness, open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Opera House Box Office: open 2 hours before each performance through the first intermission on performance days only. Phone charge: (415) 864-3330, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday (VISA, American Express, MasterCard).

MAKE A VALUED CONTRIBUTION TO SAN FRANCISCO OPERA. You can make an important contribution to San Francisco Opera by returning any tickets you cannot use to the Box Office for resale. These ticket returns are of great value to S.F. Opera and to other patrons who may be unable to obtain tickets to sold-out performances. If you are unable to use your tickets or exchange them for another performance of the same opera, you may make a full-value, tax-deductible contribution of your tickets to the Box Office or call (415) 864-3330, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Unfortunately, we are unable to apply the donations towards membership benefits.

TAXI SERVICE. Patrons needing a cab at the end of the performance should reserve one with the doorman at the taxi entrance on Grove Street before the end of the last intermission.

For the safety and comfort of our audience, all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at the Opera House cloakrooms (north and south ends of main lobby). No cameras or tape recorders are permitted in the Opera House. Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.

OPERA GLASSES are available in the cloakroom at the north end of the main lobby.

Management reserves the right to remove any patron creating a disturbance.

ACCESS FOR DISABLED PATRONS Wheelchair seating positions are located in the orchestra, mezzanine and dress circle levels. Aisle seats with swing-up armrests are located in the orchestra, dress circle, balcony circle and balcony levels. Contact

On permanent display in the Opera House lower bar:

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the S.F. Opera Box Office — (415) 864-3330 — for more information.

Accessible restrooms are located on all floors except the orchestra (1st floor) and balcony (5th floor) levels.

Accessible public telephones are located on the orchestra, mezzanine, grand tier (2nd floor) and dress circle (3rd floor) levels. Public telephone with "TDD" is located on the orchestra level in the northeast corner of the lobby.

Accessible drinking fountains are located on all floors except the balcony level.

The Opera House is equipped with a Sennheiser Infrared Listening System. Patrons may obtain wireless headphones or induction devices in the cloakroom at the south end of the main lobby.

WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE TOURS, 2000-2001 Season

Sponsored by the San Francisco Opera Guild, house and backstage tours of the War Memorial Opera House will be conducted every half hour from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on weekdays and Saturdays; and every half hour from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Sundays.

Sunday, June 3 • Saturday, June 16 • Tuesday, June 26

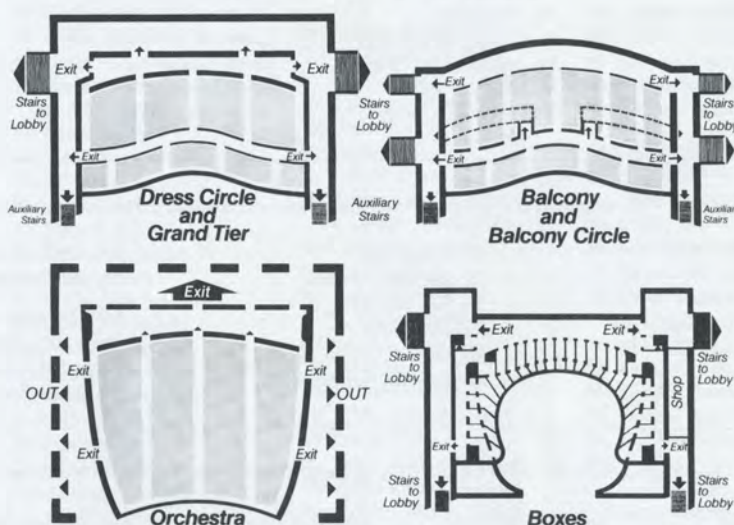
Tickets for Guild members, \$2; non-members \$5. Reservations required. Information: (510) 524-5220.

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER TOURS

Tours of the San Francisco Performing Arts Center include the War Memorial Opera House, Davies Symphony Hall and Herbst Theatre and take place as follows: Mondays, on the hour between 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Special group tours of Davies Hall only may be scheduled on Wednesdays and Saturdays by request two weeks in advance. All tours leave from the Grove Street entrance of Davies Symphony Hall. There are no tours on holidays. General \$5; seniors/students \$3. Information: (415) 552-8338.

IF YOU DRIVE TO THE OPERA and park in the Performing Arts Garage, remember that you can avoid some of the congestion by using the Gough Street entrance to the facility (between Fulton and Grove).

San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center War Memorial Opera House



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San Francisco Opera

July 1, 2001.

Immediately following tonight's performance of
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brief presentation to Lotfi Mansouri.

